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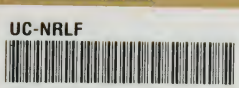

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WHY DO WE NEED A PUBLIC LIBRARY?

WHAT A FREE LIBRARY DOES FOR A COUNTRY TOWN.

Connecticut Public Library Document, 1895.

1. It keeps boys at home in the evening by giving them well-written stories of adventure.

2. It gives teachers and pupils interesting books to aid their school work in history and geography, and makes better citizens of them by enlarging their knowledge of their country and its growth.

3. It provides books on the care of children and animals, cookery and housekeeping, building and gardening, and teaches young readers how to make simple dynamos, telephones, and other machines.

4. It helps clubs that are studying history, literature, or life in other countries, and throws light upon Sunday-school lessons.

5. It furnishes books of selections for reading aloud, suggestions for entertainments and home amusements, and hints on correct speech and good manners.

6. It teaches the names and habits of the plants, birds, and insects of the neighborhood, and the differences in soil and rocks.

7. It tells the story of the town from its settlement, and keeps a record of all important events in its history.

8. It offers pleasant and wholesome stories to readers of all ages.

THE MISSION OF THE BOOK.

J. N. Larned.

There are people who may assent to all that is said of education in the life-lasting view of it, who will deny that there is a question in it of books. "We," they say, "find more for our instruction in life than in books. The reality of things interests us more and teaches us more than the report and description of them by others. We study men among men and God's works in the midst of them. We prefer to take knowledge at first hand, from nature and from society, rather than second-handedly, out of a printed page. Your book wisdom is from the closet and for closet use. It is not the kind needed in a busy and breezy world." Well, there is a half-truth in this which must not be ignored. To make everything of books in the development of men and women is a greater mistake perhaps than to make nothing of them. For life has teachings, and nature out-of-doors has teachings, for which no man, if he misses them, can find compensation in books. We can say that, frankly, to the contemner of books, and we yield no ground in doing so; for then we turn upon him and say: "Your life, sir, to which you look for all the enlightenment of soul and mind that you receive, is a brief span of a few tens of years; the circle of human acquaintance in which you are satisfied to make your whole study of mankind is a little company of a few hundred men and women, at the most; the natural world from which you think to take sufficient lessons with your unassisted eyes is made up of some few bits of city streets and country lanes and seaside sands. What can you, sir, know of life, compared with the man who has had equal years of breath and consciousness with you, and who puts with that experience some large, wide knowledge of forty centuries of human history in the whole round world besides? What can you know of mankind and human

nature compared with the man who meets and talks with as many of his neighbors in the flesh as yourself and who, beyond that, has companionship and communion of mind with the kingly and queenly ones of all the generations that are dead? What can you learn from nature compared with him who has Darwin and Dana and Huxley and Tyndall and Gray for his tutors when he walks abroad, and who, besides the home-rambling which he shares with you, can go bird-watching with John Burroughs up and down the Atlantic States, or roaming with Thoreau in Maine woods, or strolling with Richard Jefferies in English lanes and fields?"

Truth is, the bookless man does not understand his own loss. He does not know the leanness in which his mind is kept by want of the food which he rejects. He does not know what starving of imagination and of thought he has inflicted upon himself. He has suffered his interest in the things which make up God's knowable universe to shrink until it reaches no farther than his eyes can see and his ears can hear. The books which he scorns are the telescopes and reflectors and reverberators of our intellectual life, holding in themselves a hundred magical powers for the overcoming of space and time, and for giving the range of knowledge which belongs to a really cultivated mind. There is no equal substitute for them. There is nothing else which will so break for us the poor hobble of everyday sights and sounds and habits and tasks, by which our thinking and feeling are naturally tethered to a little worn round.

THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

J. N. Larned.

If it has been our privilege to see, and for some in our circle to bear a part in, the beginnings of the active educational work of the libraries, I am persuaded that it is only

the beginnings we have witnessed as yet. I am persuaded that the public library of the future will transcend our dreams in its penetrating influence. Consider for a moment what it is, and what it offers to the energies of education which a desperate necessity is awakening and organizing in the world! It is a store, a reservoir, of the new knowledge of the latest day and the ripened wisdom of the long past. To carry into the memory and into the thought of all the people who surround it, in a town, even some little part of what it holds of instructed reasoning and instructed feeling, would be to civilize that community beyond the highest experience of civilization that mankind has yet attained to. There is nothing that stands equally beside it as a possible agent of common culture. It is the one fountain of intellectual life which cannot be exhausted; which need not be channeled for any fortunate few; which can be generously led to the filling of every cup, of every capacity for old or young. There is little in it to tempt the befouling hand of the politician, and it offers no gain to the mercantile adventurer. For those who serve it on behalf of the public there are few allurements of money or fame. Its vast powers for good are so little exposed to seduction or corruption that it seems to give promises for the future which are safer and surer than any others that society can build hopes upon.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY A CIVIC CENTRE.

W. E. Foster.

In more than one locality the local public library has come to be recognized as the natural local centre of the community, around which revolve the local studies, the local industries, and all the various local interests of the town or village. Here, for instance, is the home of the local historical or antiquarian society; here also is the home of the local camera club; of the natural history society;

of the schoolmasters' club, etc. Why is this? It is because those in charge of the library have so thoroughly realized the fact that in a community the interests of all are the interests of each, and that while this is true of other institutions as related to each other,— of the natural history museum, for instance, as related to the public schools, — yet there is no one of them on which the lines of interest so invariably converge from all the others — as "all roads lead to Rome."

There is one more point of view on which I would like to touch briefly; namely, the steps preceding the opening of a public library. How shall we best develop interest in the community under these conditions? Here the question is how most effectively to place before the community the possibilities of such an institution, still largely an unknown institution to the most of the community. Obviously, in thus proceeding from the known to the unknown all possible agencies should be utilized which may tend to make the matter real to the people. If a public meeting is to be held, any speaker from abroad who is to address it should be one who has been in vital contact with the beneficent influences of a well-directed public library, and can speak feelingly and from first-hand experience with it. Both "sides" of this experience, so to speak, should be represented. That is to say, it will be well to hear, not only from the librarian of a library which has been making a place for itself in the affections of a community, but from some beneficiary of the library's good offices,—some teacher, for instance, who can speak from experience, not merely of what the library has aimed to accomplish, but of what it actually has accomplished in his own experience time and time again. In every such community, moreover, where no public library has yet been established, there are likely to be some persons, whether teachers or others, who, having been accustomed elsewhere to the benefits of a public library, can speak feelingly of the deprivation experienced

on coming to a new community where none exists. Such public-spirited citizens will be among the best and most effective missionaries of the new movement. Your community, moreover, will constitute a rather marked exception to communities generally if you do not find the local press ready and willing to coöperate in all these measures, and to open its columns to testimonies such as I have instanced.

Lastly, care and judicious attention will be needed when the library is fairly opened and during the first few months of its operation, until, in short, it is well past what may be called the "broken reed and smoking flax" period. If I were to be asked what is the most frequent occasion for failure or flagging interest here, I should reply: "The too common practice of building and equipping the library first, and engaging the librarian second;" and thus relying upon the books, unaided, to present their effective influence upon the community. No mistake could be greater, as may be seen from those instances in which the well-directed effectiveness of the librarian's personality has counted for so much. At the outset, when novelty is a leading motive, much reliance may appropriately be had on the fresh interest of current periodicals, and of the latest published books; but a library which should remain indefinitely in this stage, as a chronic condition, would be like a child who has grown into manhood without abandoning his childish toys. Novelty, recreation, serviceableness, these three, — all these are legitimate and appropriate aims at some time in the development of a public library; but the third has a potency in establishing the library in the deep affections of the community to which the other two can never approach. At the end of ten years it will not be so much the number of people whom the library's books have amused, as those who have found it capable of rendering them a real and most appreciated service, to which its officers will look with pleasure and satisfaction.

BOOKS AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

James Russell Lowell, 1885.

The opening of a free public library, then, is a most important event in the history of any town. A college training is an excellent thing; but, after all, the better part of every man's education is that which he gives himself, and it is for this that a good library should furnish the opportunity and the means. I have sometimes thought that our public schools undertook to teach too much, and that the older system, which taught merely the three R's, and taught them well, leaving natural selection to decide who should go farther, was the better. However this may be, all that is primarily needful in order to use a library is the ability to read. I say primarily, for there must also be the inclination, and after that, some guidance in reading well. Formerly the duty of a librarian was considered too much that of a watchdog, to keep people as much as possible away from the books, and to hand these over to his successor as little worn by use as he could. Librarians now, it is pleasant to see, have a different notion of their trust, and are in the habit of preparing, for the direction of the inexperienced, lists of such books as they think best worth reading. Cataloguing has also, thanks in great measure to American librarians, become a science, and catalogues, ceasing to be labyrinths without a clue, are furnished with finger-posts at every turn. Subject catalogues again save the beginner a vast deal of time and trouble by supplying him for nothing with one at least of the results of thorough scholarship, the knowing where to look for what he wants. I do not mean by this that there is or can be any short cut to learning, but that there may be, and is, such a short cut to information that will make learning more easily accessible.

But have you ever rightly considered what the mere

ability to read means? That it is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination; to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and the wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment? That it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time? More than that, it annihilates time and space for us; it revives for us without a miracle the Age of Wonder, endowing us with the shoes of swiftness and the cap of darkness, so that we walk invisible like fern-seed, and witness unharmed the plague at Athens or Florence or London; accompany Cæsar on his marches, or look in on Catiline in council with his fellow-conspirators, or Guy Fawkes in the cellar of St. Stephen's. We often hear of people who will descend to any servility, submit to any insult, for the sake of getting themselves or their children into what is euphemistically called good society. Did it ever occur to them that there is a select society of all the centuries to which they and theirs can be admitted for the asking, a society, too, which will not involve them in ruinous expense, and still more ruinous waste of time and health and faculties? . . .

One is sometimes asked by young people to recommend a course of reading. My advice would be that they should confine themselves to the supreme books in whatever literature, or still better to choose some one great author, and make themselves thoroughly familiar with him. For, as all roads lead to Rome, so do they likewise lead away from it, and you will find that, in order to understand perfectly and weigh exactly any vital piece of literature, you will be gradually and pleasantly persuaded to excursions and explorations of which you little dreamed when you began, and will find yourselves scholars before you are aware. For remember that there is nothing less profitable than scholarship for the mere sake of scholarship, nor anything more wearisome in the attainment. But the moment you have a definite aim, attention is quickened, the mother of

memory, and all that you acquire groups and arranges itself in an order that is lucid, because everywhere and always it is in intelligent relation to a central object of constant and growing interest. This method also forces upon us the necessity of thinking, which is, after all, the highest result of all education. For what we want is not learning, but knowledge; that is, the power to make learning answer its true end as a quickener of intelligence and a widener of our intellectual sympathies. . . .

I have been speaking of such books as should be chosen for profitable reading. A public library, of course, must be far wider in its scope. It should contain something for all tastes, as well as the material for a thorough grounding in all branches of knowledge. It should be rich in books of reference, in encyclopædias, where one may learn without cost of research what things are generally known. For it is far more useful to know these than to know those that are *not* generally known. Not to know them is the defect of those half-trained and therefore hasty men who find a mare's nest on every branch of the tree of knowledge. A library should contain ample stores of history, which, if it do not always deserve the pompous title which Bolingbroke gave it, of philosophy teaching by example, certainly teaches many things profitable for us to know and lay to heart; teaches, among other things, how much of the present is still held in mortmain by the past; teaches that, if there be no controlling purpose, there is, at least, a sternly logical sequence in human affairs, and that chance has but a trifling dominion over them; teaches why things are and must be so and not otherwise; . . . teaches, perhaps, more than anything else, the value of personal character as a chief factor in what used to be called destiny, for that cause is strong which has not a multitude but one strong man behind it. History is, indeed, mainly the biography of a few imperial men, and forces home upon us the useful lesson how infinitesimally important our own private affairs are to the universe

in general. History is clarified experience, and yet how little do men profit by it; nay, how should we expect it of those who so seldom are taught anything by their own! Delusions, especially economical delusions, seem the only things that have any chance of an earthly immortality. I would have plenty of biography. It is no insignificant fact that eminent men have always loved their Plutarch, since example, whether for emulation or avoidance, is never so poignant as when presented to us in a striking personality. Autobiographies are also instructive reading to the student of human nature, though generally written by men who were more interesting to themselves than to their fellow-men. I have been told that Emerson and George Eliot agreed in thinking Rousseau's "Confessions" the most interesting book they had ever read.

A public library should also have many and full shelves of political economy, for the dismal science, as Carlyle called it, if it prove nothing else, will go far towards proving that theory is the bird in the bush, though she sing more sweetly than the nightingale, and that the millennium will not hasten its coming in deference to the most convincing string of resolutions that were ever unanimously adopted in public meeting. It likewise induces in us a profound and wholesome distrust of social panaceas.

I would have a public library abundant in translations of the best books in all languages, for, though no work of genius can be adequately translated, because every word of it is permeated with what Milton calls "the precious life-blood of a master spirit," which cannot be transfused into the veins of the best translation, yet some acquaintance with foreign and ancient literatures has the liberalizing effect of foreign travel. He who travels by translation travels more hastily and superficially, but brings home something that is worth having, nevertheless. Translations properly used, by shortening the labor of acquisition, add as many years to our lives as they subtract from the processes of our education. . . .

In such a library the sciences should be fully represented, that men may at least learn to know in what a marvellous museum they live, what a wonder-worker is giving them an exhibition daily for nothing. Nor let Art be forgotten in all its many forms, not as the antithesis of Science, but as her elder or fairer sister, whom we love all the more that her usefulness cannot be demonstrated in dollars and cents. I should be thankful if every day-laborer among us could have his mind illumined, as those of Athens and of Florence had, with some image of what is best in architecture, painting, and sculpture, to train his crude perceptions and perhaps call out latent faculties. I should like to see the works of Ruskin within the reach of every artisan among us. For I hope some day that the delicacy of touch and accuracy of eye that have made our mechanics in some departments the best in the world may give us the same supremacy in works of wider range and more purely ideal scope.

Voyages and travels I would also have, good store, especially the earlier, when the world was fresh and unhackneyed and men saw things invisible to the modern eye. They are fast-sailing ships to waft away from present trouble to the Fortunate Isles.

To wash down the drier morsels that every library must necessarily offer at its board, let there be plenty of imaginative literature, and let its range be not too narrow to stretch from Dante to the elder Dumas. The world of the imagination is not the world of abstraction and nonentity, as some conceive, but a world formed out of chaos by a sense of the beauty that is in man and the earth on which he dwells. It is the realm of Might-be, our haven of refuge from the shortcomings and disillusions of life. It is, to quote Spenser, who knew it well,— "the world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil." Do we believe, then, that God gave us in mockery this splendid faculty of sympathy with things that are a joy forever? For my part, I believe

that the love and study of works of imagination is of practical utility in a country so profoundly material (or, as we like to call it, practical) in its leading tendencies as ours. The hunger after purely intellectual delights, the content with ideal possessions, cannot but be good for us in maintaining a wholesome balance of the character and of the faculties. I for one shall never be persuaded that Shakespeare left a less useful legacy to his countrymen than Watt. We hold all the deepest, all the highest satisfactions of life as tenants of imagination. Nature will keep up the supply of what are called hardheaded people without our help, and, if it come to that, there are other as good uses for heads as at the end of battering-rams.

I know that there are many excellent people who object to the reading of novels as a waste of time, if not as otherwise harmful. But I think they are trying to outwit nature, who is sure to prove cunninger than they. Look at children. One boy shall want a chest of tools, and one a book, and of those who want books one shall ask for a botany, another for a romance. They will be sure to get what they want, and we are doing a grave wrong to their morals by driving them to do things on the sly, to steal that food which their constitution craves and which is wholesome for them, instead of having it freely and frankly given them as the wisest possible diet. If we cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so neither can we hope to succeed with the opposite experiment. But we may spoil the silk for its legitimate uses. I can conceive of no healthier reading for a boy, or girl either, than Scott's novels, or Cooper's, to speak only of the dead. I have found them very good reading at least for one young man, for one middle-aged man, and for one who is growing old. No, no — banish the "Antiquary," banish "Leather Stocking," and banish all the world! Let us not go about to make life duller than it is. . . .

I have great pleasure in believing that the custom of

giving away money during their lifetime (and there is nothing harder for most men to part with, except prejudice) is more common with Americans than with any other people. It is a still greater pleasure to see that the favorite direction of their beneficence is towards the founding of colleges and libraries. My observation has led me to believe that there is no country in which wealth is so sensible of its obligations as our own. And as most of our rich men have risen from the ranks, may we not fairly attribute this sympathy with their kind to the benign influence of democracy rightly understood? . . . This is the healthy side of that good nature which democracy tends to foster, and which is so often harmful when it has its root in indolence or indifference; especially harmful where our public affairs are concerned, and where it is easiest, because there we are giving away what belongs to other people. In this country it is as laudably easy to procure signatures to a subscription paper as it is shamefully so to obtain them for certificates of character and recommendations to office. And is not this public spirit a national evolution from that frame of mind in which New England was colonized, and which found expression in these grave words of Robinson and Brewster: "We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation of which we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good and of the whole"? Let us never forget the deep and solemn import of these words. The problem before us is to make a whole of our many discordant parts, our many foreign elements; and I know of no way in which this can better be done than by providing a common system of education, and a common door of access to the best books by which that education may be continued, broadened, and made fruitful. For it is certain that, whatever we do or leave undone, those discordant parts and foreign elements are to be, whether we will or no, members of that body which Rob-

inson and Brewster had in mind, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, for good or ill. . . .

There is no way in which a man can build so secure and lasting a monument for himself as in a public library. Upon that he may confidently allow "Resurgam" to be carved, for, through his good deed, he will rise again in the grateful remembrance and in the lifted and broadened minds and fortified characters of generation after generation. The pyramids may forget their builders, but memorials such as this have longer memories.

THE LIBRARY AND CULTURE.

W. I. Fletcher.

We hear much of the library as a part of the educational apparatus of the town and the state. Yes, it is indeed that, but it is more and other than that. To my mind it should stand for culture rather than education in the narrow sense; and culture, it is now coming to be recognized, is to be had through recreation, as well as through tasks and through study. An article in the *Atlantic Monthly* takes the ground that all education up to high school age should consist of gymnastics, music, manual training, free-hand drawing, and language, mainly English, possibly a little French. This proposed "new programme in education," as the writer calls it, while it is too radical to meet acceptance at present, is in a line with much of the thought of the day, which recognizes the cultural value of the æsthetic and the pleasurable.

There is nothing out of place in the comparing of the library to the school and the college, but its true mission is not to be so limited. To a large extent it is to be compared, as an object of public care and expense, with the park, the modern common, where there are flower-beds, rare plants in conservatories, lakes with boats in summer and skating in winter, and music by excellent bands. Not very strictly

useful, these things, but recognized everywhere as ministering to the real culture of the people. Let this library, then, be the place where you will come not merely to study and store your minds with so-called "useful" knowledge, but also often to have a good time; to refresh your minds and hearts with humor and poetry and fiction. Let the boys find here wholesome books of adventure, and tales such as a boy likes; let the girls find the stories which delight them and give their fancy and imagination exercise; let the tired housewife find the novels which will transport her to an ideal realm of love and happiness; let the hard-worked man, instead of being expected always to read "improving" books of history or politics, choose that which will give him relaxation of mind and nerve, — perhaps the Innocents Abroad, or Josh Billings's "Allminax," or Samanthy at Saratoga.

THE LIBRARY'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

Melvil Dewey.

The librarian's educational motto. — To the great mass of boys and girls the school can barely give the tools with which to get an education after they are forced to begin their life work as breadwinners. Few are optimistic enough to hope that we can change this condition very rapidly. The great problem of the day is, therefore, to carry on the education after the elementary steps have been taken in the free public schools. There are numerous agencies at work in this direction, — reading rooms, reference and lending libraries, museums, summer, vacation and night schools, correspondence and other forms of extension teaching; but by far the greatest agent is good reading. An educational system which contents itself with teaching to read and then fails to see that the best reading is provided, when undesirable reading is so cheap and plentiful as to be a constant menace to the public good, is, as Huxley wisely said,

as inconsistent and absurd as to teach our children the expert use of the knife, fork, and spoon, and then provide them with no food. The most important movement before the professional educators to-day is the broadening going on so rapidly in their conception of their duties to their profession and to the public. Too many have thought of their work as limited to schools for the young during a short period of tuition. The true conception is that we should be responsible for higher as well as elementary education, for adults as well as for children, for educational work in the homes as well as in the schoolhouses, and during life as well as for a limited course. In a nutshell, the motto of the extended work should be "higher education for adults, at home, during life."

THE FREEDOM OF BOOKS.

J. N. Larned.

The free town library is wholly a product of the last half-century. It is the crowning creature of democracy for its own higher culture. There is nothing conceivable to surpass it as an agency in popular education. Schools, colleges, lectures, classes, clubs, and societies, scientific and literary, are tributaries to it, — primaries, feeders. It takes up the work of all of them to utilize it, to carry it on, and make more of it. Future time will perfect it, and will perfect the institutions out of which and over which it has grown; but it is not possible for the future to bring any new gift of enlightenment to men that will be greater, in kind, than the free diffusion of thought and knowledge as stored in the better literature of the world.

The last half of the nineteenth century would seem to be a late time in history for realizing the freedom of books. For if we consider, we must see that there is no earthly thing, except the solid earth itself, and its waters and its air, that is so truly and plainly a common heritage of man-

kind as the matter of the books that have come down from past times. If there were heritable rights in the whole public to some great store of bodily food, and they were half as clear as its heirship to these meats of the spirit and the mind, we may be sure that its claim to them would never have slept so long. Suppose that in every generation there had been given to a few men and women some endowment of extraordinary power, which perpetuated life without decay and fruitfulness without ceasing in each seed and root that was put into the earth by their hands, so that harvests from their sowing were perennial to the end of time, and that people to-day were gathering grapes from vines that had ripened in the days of Pharaohs! Can we doubt that such a cumulative ancestral gift as that would have been made common property, with equal free sharing, long ages ago? But the nature of our literary inheritance from the past is exactly that. The true literature that we garner in our libraries of books is the deathless thought, the immortal truth, the imperishable quickenings and revelations which genius — the rare gift to now and then one of the human race — has been frugally, steadily planting in the fertile soil of written speech, from the generations of the hymn-writers of the Euphrates and the Indus to the generations now alive. As I look at it, there is nothing save the air we breathe that we have common rights in so sacred and so clear, and there is no other public treasure which so reasonably demands to be kept and cared for and distributed for common enjoyment at common cost.

If we marvel at the tardiness with which even the foremost peoples have recognized their literary inheritance, and the common rights and duties attaching to it, we do but rejoice the more that they have come to the recognition at last. In my belief it is the keystone now slipping to its place in the slowly rounded arch of our modern civilization. Free education and free books in a free democracy, — that is the system of an enduring social structure. The future

may put carvings of wonderful beauty upon our arch, and build temples and palaces and towers that rise to heaven upon it; but what we do now is the work that will have given solidity and security to the whole.

Free corn in old Rome bribed a mob and kept it passive. By free books and what goes with them in modern America we mean to erase the mob from existence. There lies the cardinal difference between a civilization which perished and a civilization that will endure.

THE LIBRARY FOR RECREATION.

Sir Walter Besant.

The public library is an adult school; it is a perpetual and lifelong continuation class; it is the greatest educational factor that we have; and the librarian is becoming our most important teacher and guide. The dream of the Heavy Moralist is that in opening a free library you are persuading the workingman to become a student in science, history, or language. He himself, if you please (the Heavy Moralist), goes every day to his office and does six hours of work, broken by a lunch which occupies an hour. He then goes home, dines at half past seven, and spends the evening with a little music, a little game of cards, a little light reading, a little talk. His sons do the same. Does he expect his sons to spend their evenings in learning quantities of fine things, all for the pure love of knowledge? Certainly not. Yet he will talk glibly about the workingman, who has had a nine hours' day of hard work, taking advantage of the free library for purposes of self-improvement. This is not hypocrisy: it is stupidity. What the average workingman wants is exactly what the Heavy Moralist and his sons want, — an evening of quiet rest and recreation, — and if he finds it in the company of Walter Scott, Dickens, Marryatt, Thackeray, Fielding, Smollett, Defoe, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, George Eliot, not to speak of living men and women, should we not rejoice?

WHY MR. CARNEGIE FOUNDS FREE LIBRARIES.

Andrew Carnegie.

I choose free libraries as the best agencies for improving the masses of the people, because they give nothing for nothing. They only help those who help themselves. They never pauperize. They reach the aspiring, and open to these the chief treasures of the world — those stored up in books. A taste for reading drives out lower tastes.

Besides this, I believe good fiction one of the most beneficial reliefs to the monotonous lives of the poor. For these and other reasons I prefer the free public library to most if not any other agencies for the happiness and improvement of a community.

THE MODERN LIBRARY MOVEMENT.

Joseph LeRoy Harrison.

And now what is the modern library movement? What is its moving thought, its scope, its purpose, its aspirations? The modern library movement is a movement to increase by every possible means the accessibility of books, to stimulate their reading, and to create a demand for the best. Its motive is helpfulness; its scope, instruction and recreation; its purpose, the enlightenment of all; its aspirations, still greater usefulness. It is a distinctive movement, because it recognizes, as never before, the infinite possibilities of the public library, and because it has done everything within its power to develop those possibilities.

Among the peculiar relations that a library sustains to a community, which the movement has made clear and greatly advanced, are its relations to the school and university extension. The education of an individual is coincident with the life of that individual. It is carried on by the influences and appliances of the family, vocation, gov-

ernment, the church, the press, the school, and the library. The library is unsectarian, and hence occupies a field independent of the church. It furnishes a foundation for an intelligent reading of paper and magazine. It is the complement and supplement of the school, coöperating with the teacher in the work of educating the child, and furnishing the means for continuing that education after the child has gone out from the school. These are important relations. From the beginning the child is taught the value of books. In the kindergarten period he learns that they contain beautiful pictures; in the grammar grades they do much to make history and geography attractive; in the high school they are indispensable as works of reference.

Few of those who enter the public schools become academic pupils, but they have been taught to read, and are graduated into the world in possession of a power of almost infinite possibilities. It is as the means by which that power may be developed that the supplemental work of the library begins. Were it not for the library, the education of the masses would, in most cases, cease when the doors of the school swing in after them for the last time; but it keeps those doors wide open, and is, in the truest sense of the word, the university of the people. The library is as much a part of the educational system of a community as the public school, and is coming more and more to be regarded with the same respect and supported in the same generous manner. It is not necessary to consider here the means which have been employed to increase the usefulness of the library in this respect; but sufficient to say that it is constantly increasing, that librarians are fully alive to this function of the library, and their efforts are being ably seconded by all educators.

The relation of the library to university extension is perhaps even closer than its relation to the public school, for its character makes it the most natural local centre of this form of education, and often its organizing force. . . .

To-day the relation between the library and university extension is firmly established, and in a natural stage of development. With its class rooms and lecture rooms, its books and its reference lists, its intelligent librarian and studious atmosphere, the library provides university extension with an attractive and appropriate home; and university extension, on its part, furnishes the library with that which it most covets, an added constituency.

These are but two of the many ways by which the public library is endeavoring to serve the public. The modern library spirit has found within the expansive walls of the institution possibilities which half a century ago were not even dreamed of, and is directing all its energy to finding the means of realizing these possibilities. . . .

The public library of to-day is an active, potential force, serving the present, and silently helping to develop the civilization of the future. The spirit of the modern library movement which surrounds it is thoroughly catholic, thoroughly progressive, and thoroughly in sympathy with the people. It believes that the true function of the library is to serve the people, and that the only test of success is usefulness.

The Riverside Press
Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.
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